

# Pet Worms

BY KATE HOFMANN

Worms make perfect pets. You never have to walk them. They need feeding only once a week or so. And they'll turn your kitchen scraps into some really great stuff!

## What You Need

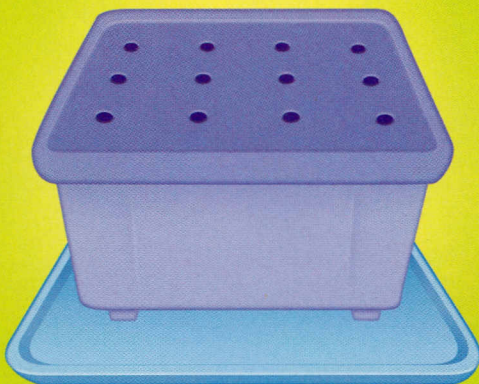
- Plastic storage bin and lid: 10-gallon (38-liter) size or bigger
- Tray for under the bin
- Sharp-pointed scissors or cordless drill
- Newspaper
- Water
- Handful of soil
- Red wiggler worms (*Eisenia fetida*)

Would they really want us for pets?

Sure! Who wouldn't want less garbage—and lots of happy flowers and veggies in the garden?

Of course, we're cute, too.

Follow these easy steps to put worms to work for you!



**1.** Use the scissors or drill to make air holes in the bottom and lid of the bin. (Ask an adult to help.) Slide the tray under the bin to catch drips.



**2.** Tear newspaper into strips about 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide. Fill the bin about half-full with this bedding.



## How to Feed Your Pets

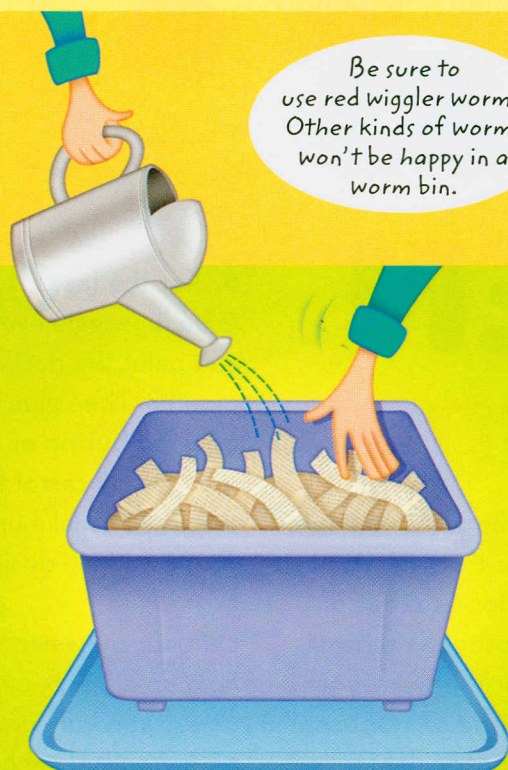
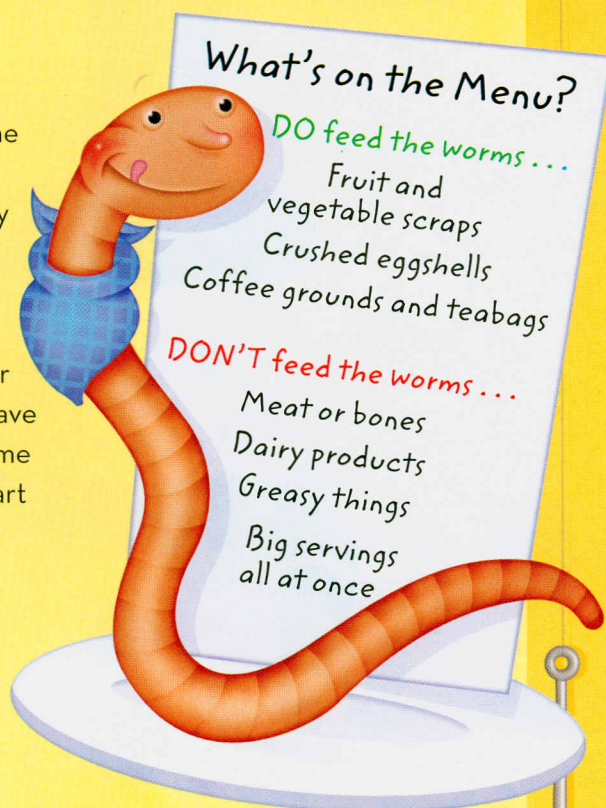
Red wigglers will devour banana peels, apple cores, lettuce, lots of leftovers—gone-bad, and other things—and then they'll poop them out as black castings. The castings make great fertilizer for gardens and houseplants.

Bury a small amount of food underneath the bedding and add more when that's gone. You'll also want to add more newspaper strips from time to time. Don't let the bin get too wet or too dry. You'll know when

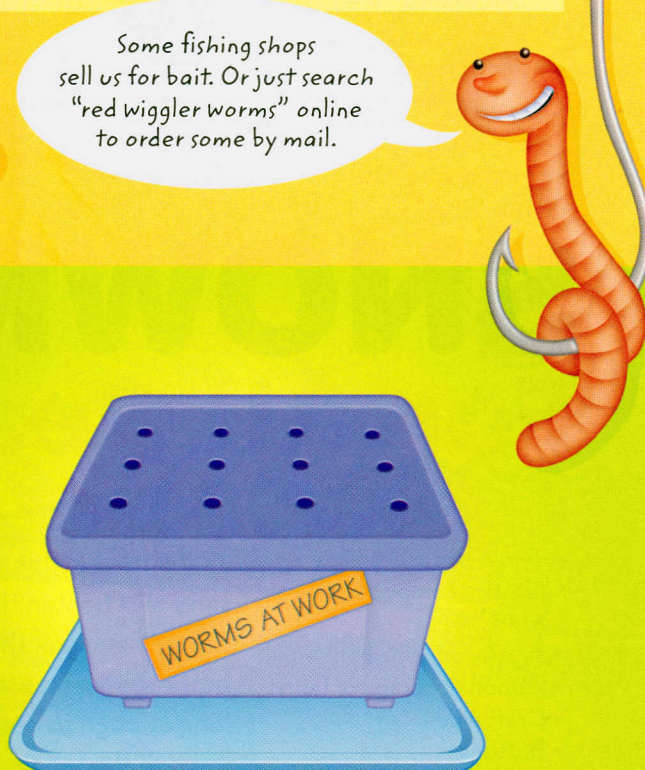
everything's just right: The bin won't smell, and the worms will be healthy and having babies.

When you have lots of castings, scoop them out and add them to your garden. And when you have plenty of worms, give some to friends so they can start their own worm bins! 🐛

For answers to all your questions about worm composting, check out *Worms Eat My Garbage* by Mary Appelhof (Flower Press, 1997).



**3.** Add water to the bedding. Keep adding and mixing until all the paper is damp but not soggy.



**4.** Toss in a handful of soil. This will help the worms' digestion. Then add the worms and put the lid on. (They like the dark.)